5: Lewis E-5 (1943-1944, 1947-1948) 1955
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a temporary clinic to last only for the duration of the assignment of the doctor provided by the Department of Health and Welfare. Later, however, at the suggestion of the Department, we decided to establish the clinic as a village cooperative. The cooperative form of organization was being encouraged by the federal government at that time, on the assumption that it was in accord with native tradition. We also believed that a cooperative would be more useful in that the doctor might be kept on by the village itself long after we had left and the doctor's original assignment expired. Moreover, we viewed this enterprise as an experiment in setting up a democratic institution in a village in which the tradition of democracy was practically absent, and as a test of the readiness and ability of the Tepoztecans for such an organization.

The plan for the cooperative was fully explained to the local authorities in Tepoztlán, especially to the mayor of the municipality, and it seemed to meet with his interest and approval. When a doctor was finally obtained from the Department of Health and Welfare, the mayor was asked to call a meeting of the entire community to introduce the doctor and to discuss plans for the cooperative. He promised to call such a meeting but never did. The members of our mission thereupon visited many of the families in each barrio, and a meeting of the villagers was arranged. A Tepoztecan band was hired to create a fiesta atmosphere, for we had already learned that practically the only occasion that will bring Tepoztecans together is a fiesta. More than 160 Tepoztecans attended the meeting. This was a good turnout for the village, considering their general lack of confidence. The organization of the cooperative was discussed, and many Tepoztecans participated in the discussion.

It was decided to charge a membership fee of one peso, and 25 centavos a month thereafter. In addition, members were to pay one peso to consult the doctor, and this would include free medicines. The money collected was to form a fund for the purchase of medicines and other supplies and for paying the rent of the doctor's office. The ultimate objective was for the cooperative to be self-supporting, even to the extent of paying for a doctor if it had to. It was hoped that the six-month period for which the doctor was assigned by the Department of Health and Welfare

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escape his watchful eye. Nor did it escape the notice of others in positions of power who did hold office. While the medical aspects of the clinic were of paramount concern to local health practitioners, its organizational aspects attracted the watchfulness of local political officials.

The Political Climate of Tepoztlán

The village of Tepoztlán is the largest of eight villages that comprise the municipality of Tepoztlán. It is the seat of the municipal government and as such is the most important administrative and political center of the municipality. The municipality of Tepoztlán is one of 27 municipios of the state of Morelos. It is governed by the state constitution which provides for "free municipios," local governments elected by popular vote.

The municipal government consists of the following officers: mayor, syndic, comptroller, secretary, treasurer, police chief, subpolice chief, justice of the peace, his secretary, and a porter. In addition, there are eight councilmen, each representing one of the wards of the village. The four major officials—mayor, syndic, comptroller, and justice of the peace—are elected by popular vote for a two-year period. The other officials are appointed by the mayor in agreement with the syndic and comptroller.

The duties of the major officials are determined by state law. Their manner of functioning depends upon their personalities. A meek mayor will serve only as a figurehead and allow the syndic and secretary to run the government. An aggressive mayor may take over the functions of the other officials. As executive officer, the mayor is the official representative of Tepoztlán in dealings with the outside. His signature is necessary for most correspondence and official acts. He sets the fines for infractions of the law; in addition, villagers often bring their private difficulties and family quarrels to him.

By far the greatest number of tasks falls to the secretary. He is generally the most literate of the officials. He opens and closes the government offices six days a week, signs all correspondence, attends all public functions, maintains the records of the munici-